

TOWN OF GROTON PLANNING BOARD

Virtual Meeting Thursday, May 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes

A virtual meeting of the Planning Board was held on Thursday, May 14, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was broadcasted via Zoom and was available to view on the Groton Channel pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order Concerning the Open Meeting Law.

Members Present:

Mr. Russell Burke, Chair
Mr. George Barringer, Board Member
Mr. Timothy M. Svarczkopf, Board Member
Mr. David Bonnett, Board Member
Ms. Lorayne Black, Board Member

Members not Present:

Mr. Scott Wilson, Vice Chair
Ms. Annika Nilsson Ripps, Clerk

Also Present:

Mr. Takashi Tada, Land Use Director/Town Planner

Discussion – Extension of COVID-19 State of Emergency

Mr. Tada explained the Governor's state of emergency was extended through Monday, May 18, 2020, and the Groton Select Board had adopted some protocols for transitioning back to some semblance of operations at the Town Hall. He said the current protocols adopted by the Select Board would allow for the Town Hall to reopen to certain employees including department heads and other essential staff. He also said department heads would start trickling back in the week after the state of emergency expired and then two weeks after that the support staff would start to return on a limited basis, especially for offices such as the Land/Use Department and the Water Department where there would normally be multiple employees in close proximity to each other.

Further, Mr. Tada said Town Hall would remain closed to the public for at least one additional month with the exception of pre-arranged appointments as needed. He added there would have to be a specific location in which to meet and there would be a plexiglass screen that separated the employee and the member of the public.

Mr. Tada commented that virtual board meetings via Zoom would continue to take place until at least September.

Discussion – Spring Town Meeting – Updates and Preparations

Mr. Burke said the latest plan was to hold the Spring Town Meeting on Saturday, June 13th, at 10:00 a.m. on the athletic field at the middle school. Mr. Tada said there was a rain date of June 14th but if the weather did not cooperate either day there was a contingency plan to use the gymnasium at the middle school.

Mr. Burke stated the Planning Board agreed with the Select Board's request to bring forth only the bylaw recodification article at the Spring Town Meeting, while postponing the other zoning amendment articles (the clarification of site plan review criteria, and the revisions to the accessory apartment bylaw) until the Fall Town Meeting. He further stated the Select Board provided a unanimous recommendation for approval of the recodification but the Finance Committee had not weighed in on it.

Mr. Burke commented that the table of contents for the recodified zoning bylaw would be available at the Spring Town Meeting along with a brief explanation of the changes with regard to the expired provisions.

MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Plan) Update

Mr. Burke stated the Town of Groton was currently considered certified and they could apply for Action Grants. He said a working group met a few times via Zoom to review the potential projects and the highest priority was the recurring flooding of Broadmeadow Road. He further said at the last Town Meeting funds were appropriated for some remedial work which consisted of dredging and other aspects. He said they were putting together a proposal that not only looked at dredging but doing restoration and enhancement of the entire ecosystem associated with James Brook and the properties that it adjoined. He noted they were working with Weston & Sampson in preparing the application.

Mr. Burke said the local match would be approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000. Mr. Tada said the appropriation that was approved at the previous years' Spring Town Meeting was \$50,000 and the Town should be able to come up with some in-kind contributions as well.

Mr. Tada stated the group would be meeting again on May 20th, 2020.

Committee Updates

- Complete Streets Committee

Mr. Barringer commented they received estimates for four proposed projects which would be included as part of the Fall Town Meeting. He further commented the estimates reflected 25% of the construction estimates but came in over the \$400,000 limit. He said the committee reviewed the proposed projects in detail and made some suggestions to

Nitsch Engineering as to how they thought they might be able to take off approximately \$40,000 in expenses.

Mr. Barringer said the submission deadline was early fall but that it may be delayed due to the current pandemic.

Mr. Barringer said the Town of Groton was responsible for the engineering funds to do all of the engineering work to make the construction projects possible. He reiterated that Nitsch Engineering had already done a 25% design for the construction estimate so the additional funds would be required to complete the 100% design so they could go out to bid. He said he was hopeful that a request for funding would be on the Fall Town Meeting warrant.

- Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Svarczkopf commented at the last meeting they discussed which Articles they would take to the Spring Town Meeting, noting there was a lot of conversation about the Prescott School sprinkler. Further, Mr. Svarczkopf said they received three bids for the project and were going to go with the lowest bidder.

Consideration of Annual Reorganization and Appointments

The Planning Board collectively agreed to wait until after the election, which would be held on June 9th, to reorganize the Board. He said at that point he was hopeful there would be a full quorum of the Planning Board.

General Business

- ZBA Updates

Mr. Tada stated the ZBA had a special permit hearing scheduled for an addition to a property that did not conform because of the size of the lot. (45 Gilson Road)

- Approval of Meeting Minutes from the April 9, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Barringer made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2020 meeting as presented. Ms. Black seconded the motion.

A Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Mr. Barringer, Ms. Black, Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Svarczkopf, and Mr. Burke	5
Nay:		0

VOTE: 5– 0 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Other Comments

Mr. Tada commented the Town of Groton had been designated as a “Green Community” and was eligible for funding. He said they submitted a request to use the initial funding grant. He added that Ms. Karen Chapman of the MRPC would present a draft of the Housing Production Plan for review by the end of the month.

Planning Board Meeting Schedule

- June 11, 2020
- June 13, 2020 – Spring Town Meeting

Adjournment

Mr. Barringer made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Svarczkopf seconded the motion.

A Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Mr. Barringer, Mr. Svarczkopf, Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Black, and Mr. Burke	5
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Nay:		0
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VOTE: 5 – 0 – 0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Trish Gedziun

Approved 6/11/2020